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Message Text

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51
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 PC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /127 W
---------- 002830
P R 131700Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0455
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
CINCSO
CICLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 1948

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PFOR
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION AGAIN THREATENS TO BOYCOTT ELECTIONS

REF: SD-1936

1. ON MAY 10, THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) ISSUED A RESOLUTION INTRODUCING SEVERAL MAJOR MODIFICATIONS IN THE CURRENT ELECTORAL PROCESS, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH PERMITS VOTERS TO CAST THEIR BALLOT AT ANY POLLING BOOTH WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY WHERE THEY ARE REGISTERED RATHER THAN ONLY AT THE SPECIFIC BOOTH WHERE THEY ARE INSCRIBED.TO SWEETEN THE PILL FOR THE OPPOSITION, THE JCE ALSO RESOLVED THAT ITS MAY 3 RULING ELIMINATING THE NECESSITY OF PRESENTING ONE'S IDENTIFICATION CARD (CEDULA) WHEN VOTING HAD BEEN RESCINDED. MOREOVER, THE JCE ALSO RULED THAT THOSE WHO ALREADY HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE LOCATION OF THEIR POLLING BOOTH WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO VOTE ELSEWHERE AND THAT THOSE WHO STILL DID NOT KNOW WHERE THEY WERE REGISTERED COULD ONLY VOTE ELSEWHERE AFTER 12 NOON ON ELECTION DAY.

2. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, THIS COMPROMISE SOLUTION WAS
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NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY TO THE SANTIAGO ACCORD WHICH

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PROMPTLY ANNOUNCED ON MAY 11 (AND REITERATED ON MAY 12)
THAT ALL FOUR PARTIES COMPOSING THE ACCORD WOULD BOYCOTT
THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS IF
THE JCE RESOLUTION PERMITTING
THE ELECTORATE TO VOTE ANYWHERE WAS NOT RESCINDED. A
SERIES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS BETWEEN THE JCE AND OP-
POSITION LEADERS HAD AS OF MAY 13 FAILED TO
BREAK THE CURRENT IMPASSE.

3. COMMENT: NOW IN THE FINAL TWO DAYS, THE DOMINICAN
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IS PROVING TO BE A REAL CLIFF-HANGER.
THE OPPOSITION IS DEEPLY DIVIDED OVER THE BOYCOTT ISSUE,
SOME APPARENTLY FEARING THAT OFFICIAL FRAUD MAY DEPRIVE
THEM OF AN ELECTORAL VICTORY. THEY ARE THUS UNWILLING TO
"LEGITIMATIZE" THE NEW ADMINISTRATION BY PARTICIPATION
IN THE ELECTIONS. OTHERS, HOWEVER, SEEMINGLY FEEL THAT
HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NONE, ANTICIPATING WINNING
A NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE CONGRESS AS WELL AS SEVERAL
IMPORTANT MAYORSHIPS.

4. THE JCE ITSELF IS REPORTEDLY UNDER CONTINUING
PRESSURE FROM THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS FROM MANY INDE-
PENDENT DOMINICANS WHO BELIEVE THE INCONVENIENCES OF THE
NEW ELECTORAL REGISTER WILL SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE THE
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTERS. WHETHER ALL PARTIES CONCERNED
WILL BE ABLE TO FIND A FACE-SAVING SOLUTION TO PERMIT
THE OPPOSITION TO RUN REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN ANY EVENT,
PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT SHOULD
THE OPPOSITION BOYCOTT THE ELECTIONS, HE WILL NOT HESITATE
TO RUN ALONE.

5. FURTHER CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE JCE AND OP-
POSITION ARE SCHEDULED FOR TODAY, MAY 13.
CROWLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION LAW, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, BOYCOTTS, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANTO01948
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740117-0087
From: SANTO DOMINGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740552/aaaabunh.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: SD-1936
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPPOSITION AGAIN THREATENS TO BOYCOTT ELECTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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